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# Our Unitarian Faith

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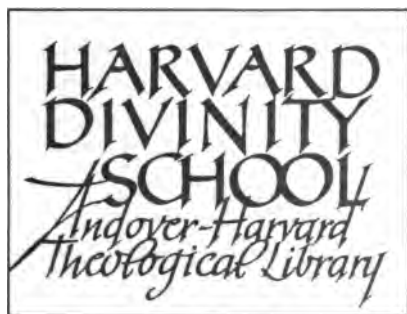
*J. T. MARRIOTT*

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## OUR UNITARIAN FAITH.



# OUR UNITARIAN FAITH

EXPLAINED TO

YOUNG PEOPLE.

BY

J. T. MARRIOTT.

“ And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart : and thou shalt diligently teach them to thy children.”

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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Nobody among us would claim the right to speak for the Unitarian body at large. In the following pages I speak for myself. But I have no doubt that such thoughts as are here set forth do in substance prevail amongst members of our household of faith. I gladly avail myself of the opportunity which is afforded me by the Sunday School Association, of publishing these "addresses" on Unitarian Doctrine, because I strongly hold the opinion that it is due from us to our young people to help them to form some definite views concerning the religion which is dear to ourselves. This little book follows the lines, and freely reproduces passages, of a previous one, "Our Unitarian Faith for Young People," now out of print. I have preserved the same direct and oral form of address, in the hope that my presentation of a difficult subject may thus be made more interesting to young readers.

J. T. MARRIOTT.

Manchester, October, 1889.

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# Our Unitarian Faith.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *IS THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY TAUGHT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?*

"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."—*Eph.* iv. 6.

THE question I want to put to you, my young friends, in the present address, is this—Is the doctrine of the Trinity taught in the New Testament? And if I give you *my* answer to that question it is not that I want you merely to take my word for it; I should like you to look for yourselves and give your *own* answer. We will presently open our books and see what is there written in passages which are generally supposed to refer to the Trinity. But before we open the New Testament, perhaps some of you want to know what "the Trinity" means. The word is not at all an easy one to understand, so I will try to explain it to you. The first part of it, "Tri," means three; the second is shortened from unity, and means one. The whole word, fully drawn out, would be Tri-unity, and would signify three-in-one. Now, the majority of Christian

people suppose (they do not seriously think about it, but believe just what has always been told them in church or chapel), that they must apply this notion of three-in-one to the Divine Being whom they worship. They suppose that God has somehow three parts in his nature, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They suppose that some good is to be derived from their regarding God in this manner as a Trinity. The hymns they sing often set forth the idea in the closing verse; they use the formula—"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," in the service of baptism; and they bring into all their ceremonies some mention of God's threeness, if I may use the expression, as if the belief in that were of very great importance. We, on the other hand, belong to a community in which that doctrine is not believed. We worship in a Unitarian church, that is, in a church where God is thought of as one Being, one Person, one Life, and in no sense three. And I am going to try and show you, in this and in my next address, why we believe that God is one. I begin by asking if you can find the doctrine of the Trinity in the New Testament, because, as you know, it is to the New Testament that Christian people first look for guidance as to what they ought to believe. Churchmen, Wesleyans, Baptists, all Christendom indeed, will tell you that they get their belief from the New Testament. That is their text-book. Very well, then; we want to see if the New Testament really does teach the Trinity. We are about to honestly deal with the question, if in these writings there is anything to warrant the belief that God has a threefold nature, as people seem to think; or if such a belief is not rather an error which has in some way



crept into the Christian faith in later times. My own reading of the New Testament leads me to say that it is what might be called a Unitarian collection of writings from beginning to end; that it contains no Trinitarian statement whatever; that the God of the Gospels is simply the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. But I must not beg the question. Let us look and see.

The first point to which I must call your attention is that the word "Trinity" is not in the New Testament. If you search from the beginning of *Matthew* to the end of *Revelation* you will not find any word that in the original Greek corresponds, even ever so remotely, to our word Trinity. Of course all scholars know this perfectly well, but it is worth while thus to point it out to you, if only for the purpose of setting you thinking. Still, our Trinitarian friend will perhaps argue, the *idea* may be there, the teaching may be there, without the word. Certainly, that is a fair contention; so we will turn now, if you please, to any passage that may seem, according to our Trinitarian friend, to teach the divine threeness, along with the divine oneness. Those of you who have got the authorised version of the New Testament with you kindly open it at *I John* v. 7. You will there read: "For there are three that bear record in heaven,—the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost." Now, we all feel at once that this passage is very striking, very explicit, and very much to the point. What have we to say of it? I ask you to observe, in the first place, that it is the only passage in the New Testament that contains any direct reference to three heavenly objects. I will examine it with you in a moment; but before doing so I should like just to say how strange it seems that a doctrine

of such great importance should only have one clear text in its favour; that God should hang so weighty a matter on a single string! It seems to me that if He had intended us to think of Himself as a Trinity, He would have given us a hundred declarations to that effect. But now, let those of my young friends who have got the revised version of the New Testament (that is to say, the correct translation, so far as it is known, from the original writings), turn to the same chapter and verse, and you will see that something very remarkable has happened. *The passage is struck out!* It is in the book no longer. People who want to prove from Scripture that God *should* be worshipped as if He were three in one, must not now quote that text, which never was anything better than a trespasser in the chapter, and which has at last been caught trespassing. And why is it struck out,—this verse about the three in heaven that bear witness? I will tell you. In the course of these lectures I intend to speak to you one day about the Bible, somewhat freely and somewhat fully, and I don't want to raise that subject now more than I am obliged. I must, however, just tell you one thing in relation to the Scriptures, which may help you better to understand why this text is not in the New Version, as I am very glad it is not. I have used the term "Scriptures," and it means things which are *written*. You know (though it is a point one is a little apt to forget) that in the times when the New Testament was made, there was, as yet, no such invention as printing. Each of you has a printed copy of the Bible; but in those early ages, every copy had to be made with the pen, in manuscript, or, as we now say, in handwriting; and for this purpose writers were

employed to copy the books for use in Christian churches. These penmen, or scribes, as they were called, sometimes, of course, made mistakes in copying. Occasionally, I dare say, it happened that a writer was not able fully to make out what he had to transcribe; or he might even have some reason of his own for making slight alterations. If the sense did not seem quite complete to his mind, he would perhaps put an explanatory word or two at the side, in the margin. That is the sort of thing that happened, no doubt, in this particular instance. The passage I have quoted was evidently written in the margin by a copyist who thought that something of the kind was required to make out the sense. In the previous verse there are some curious references to the "water" and the "blood," and in the verse following you see that it says: "and there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood." I imagine the writer, having some interpretive fancy of his own, felt that he could make the reading more complete by adding: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit," so he added this as an amplifying clause. Afterwards another copyist comes to the same point, and writes all that he finds before him, including the little bit in the margin. In some such manner the New Testament has received, from time to time, many passages which were not in the original text. It has long been known by those who had an intimate knowledge of the subject that this text, on which people have very much relied in defending the doctrine of the Trinity, have crept in wrongly, and could not be used as an argument. The revisers who lately gave us the new version have been obliged to admit this view,



though you may be quite sure they would have preferred to let the passage stand; they admit that it is "spurious," and have therefore left it out altogether. I fear that for some time to come there will be many ignorant persons ready to support their "belief" in the so-called Trinity by the use of this favourite quotation; but we have the satisfaction of knowing that it no longer forms any part of the New Testament.

We come now to another class of passages which are sometimes quoted in defence of the Trinity—namely, phrases in ascriptions and doxologies. The Apostle Paul wrote various letters, or, as they are generally called, epistles, to the newly-founded Christian churches, to encourage them in the discipleship of Christ. It was his habit, as that of others also, to open or close these letters with a few words commending the brethren to God's blessing. For example, at the end of the two epistles addressed to the Christians in Corinth, the writer says: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." If the Trinity were not in one's mind beforehand, I venture to say that nobody would ever think of using such words now in the Trinitarian sense. Will any intelligent and candid person say that here is a scripture proof that God is three in one? The writer prays that the grace of Jesus, the love of God, the communion of the Holy Spirit, may be with those at Corinth who have been converted to the new religion. He does not say that these three are God; he does not hint at anything of the kind. You have only to turn to other epistles to see how childish such reasoning is. At the end of the epistle to the Ephesians, for example,

the words are: "Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ;" but nothing is added as to the Holy Spirit. Shall we therefore argue that, in the mind of the writer, God is a *two-fold* Being, the Father and the Son? Again, in both the letters to Timothy, the salutation is from God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost not being mentioned. Shall we say therefore, again, that the writer was making for himself a *two-fold* image of God? The fact is, whatever may have been Paul's view of Jesus, it is clear that he thought of God quite separately and distinctly, as the one Supreme Being who had been, for long ages past, the Jehovah of his people. He did not dream of our Trinity, which, as a Christian doctrine, had not then come into existence; and it is doing wrong to the fame of Paul and the apostles for anyone to twist their language in such a manner as to make it responsible for this bad theology.

But there is still another set of verses in the New Testament which Trinitarian theologians are fond of quoting. They try to prove the Trinity from the lips of Jesus himself. What poor proof they get in this way you will presently see. The Gospel of John is the principal book to which they appeal;—the most difficult Gospel of all the four to understand, for reasons I cannot now stay to point out. Our attention is directed to the words attributed to Jesus (chap. x. 30)—"I and my Father are one." Suppose we admit, then, that Jesus did actually make use of words like these, yet what do they mean? Do they mean that this man breathing our human life on earth is, in disguise, the very God who fills the heaven of heavens? that Jesus is claiming to be himself God, the second part of the

Divine Trinity? If Jesus ever did make such a claim—as I absolutely disbelieve—then he was speaking in a manner quite the contrary of that which was usual with him. For he tells us also, in the same conversation with his disciples: “The Father is greater than I.” He prays to God for strength, and teaches his disciples to pray to the Father in heaven. He was baptised in the baptism of repentance, after being tempted; as, we are told, God “cannot be tempted.” And do you remember how when a certain ruler came and asked him the way of eternal life, Jesus declined to be worshipped, as the One only source of goodness should be worshipped? “Why callest thou me good? none is good, save One, even God!” We can well imagine with what gesture he made this answer, how with uplifted hand he would point his questioner toward the Father’s dwelling-place. Therefore, I hold that Jesus never did claim, and never could have claimed, to be one with God in the Trinitarian acceptation of the word. Moreover, it is easy to see, from the context, that quite other thoughts were in his mind. Some of the Jews want to bring him to judgment for an evil doer, and to destroy him, and Jesus tells them that it is God who has given him strength and wisdom; that he is here to do God’s will, and God is working with him to bring nearer the kingdom of heaven. He claims that God and himself are united in the bond of one purpose, one spirit. Just as a beam of light is united with the sun from which it is shining, so was Christ one with God in the aims of his loving heart, and the goodness of his life and work. It is a spiritual agreement, a harmony of thought, affection, purpose. The man Christ Jesus is one in feeling and in spirit with the Eternal Father. This

is simply what he claims, and it utterly confounds and spoils his beautiful teaching to think of his words in any other sense.

Do you doubt it in the least? Then I must ask you to turn to another chapter, which will convince you beyond all question, that I have given you the right interpretation. In chap. xvii. we find Jesus again referring to this oneness between God and himself. He wants to assure his disciples, soon before his coming death, that the Almighty protection will ever be with them in their holy work, as it has always been with him. At verse 11 he prays thus: "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given me, that they may be one, *even as we are*." Even as we are! At verses 22-23 he uses similar words; he prays that all people who afterwards come to believe on him by the preaching of these disciples "may be one, *even as we are one*, I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be perfected into one." Even as we are one! Surely no further proof can be needed than this, from the lips of Jesus himself, that for him the union between God and himself was a spiritual union, a harmony of thoughts, a sympathy of feeling and aim, as the disciples themselves were to be bound together in one perfect love; that union of which Charles Wesley has sung in one of his sweetest hymns:—

Father, at Thy footstool see  
Those who now are one in Thee;  
Each to each unite, and bless,  
Keep us in Thy perfect peace.

There is an occasion in the story of Christ that often comes into my mind when I reflect on this subject of the Trinity. It is when the disciples came and asked him to teach them how to pray. In answer to their request

Jesus gives them the little prayer which is known as the Lord's Prayer, which we repeat in our services in the church, and which children learn to say at home. If the doctrine of the Trinity were true, if Jesus were the second person in the Godhead, I could not imagine him going apart into that quiet place to pray, and bidding us follow his example. Of course those who believe in the Trinity will say that Jesus had *two* natures, a human and a divine; and that when he prayed it was the human part that prayed, the divine nature being somehow put aside for the moment. To me all this is sheer foolishness, a theological jugglery,—I could not get it out of my mind that the second person in the Trinity was actually praying to the first, if I believed such a doctrine. Read the story in its simplicity. I see in Jesus Christ the perfect man, who worshipped God the Father just as you and I in turn may do, though I doubt not, in his case, much more closely and spiritually, so that the blessing came to him in far richer measure than it comes to us.

Lastly, let us consider, in a few concluding words, what is meant by the Holy Spirit which people regard as the third person in the Godhead. When the end of Christ's life drew very near, he longed to be held in remembrance by his followers. He instituted a simple rite, now often spoken of as the Lord's Supper, in order that they might the better keep the memory of his work warm in their hearts, and be strengthened for the duties and trials they would have to meet, when he was no longer with them. He prayed that a spirit of remembrance might be given them; he assured them that the spirit would remind them, often, of whatsoever he had said and done. He did not promise

them the third person of any Trinity (what hint of such a thing is there in the story?), but the comforting and strengthening spirit. I shall have to speak in our next address on this third element in the Godhead. I only refer to it here to show you that the New Testament, and the language of Jesus especially, contains no more the notion of a third person than of a second. God is a spirit; and He evermore sends forth an influence whereby men are able to call to mind and cherish the sacred lessons of the past. There is but one God, though we may vary the forms by which we think of Him. In the first chapter of Genesis He is spoken of as the Creator of the Universe, and we see Him, as it were, making the heavens and the earth. In later ages, He is thought of as the Lord of all things, Jehovah, the Eternal. On one page of the Bible He is the King of Kings; on another, the Shepherd who leads his flock into green pastures. He is the Most High; He is the Saviour; He is, above all things, the Father. Jesus said the Comforter should come. But it is the same spirit. I should not wish to have only one name; for no single name can fully express His being. We think of Him in many different aspects; yet we know that He is one, though we have a hundred names for Him. He is everywhere; but He is one. He works in this sphere and that; but He is the one Divine worker. He changes winter to spring, and makes the season bring the flowers again; and He whose beauty appears in the lilies of the field is the same spirit that whispers in your conscience and mine, or bids us follow in the steps of Jesus Christ. The New Testament, my young friends, does not teach us that the Godhead is three in one, or anything of the

kind; but it sets forth various manifestations of the Divine presence; while, if we read it thoughtfully, we seem to hear in its pages an echo of the grand old Bible thought: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one,"—adding a thought of its own—and that one God is the Father of us all.



## CHAPTER II.

### *HOW DID CHRISTIANS COME TO BELIEVE IN THE TRINITY?*

“One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”—*Eph.* iv. 6.


I TRIED to make it clear to you, my young hearers, in my previous address, that the doctrine of the Trinity is not taught in the New Testament. I showed you that the New Testament does not contain the word Trinity, and that the only verse which could formerly be said to refer explicitly to such an idea was spurious, and has at length been struck out. I showed you, what to my thinking is a very important point, that Jesus did not teach anything of the kind, still less did he claim to be himself a part and person in the Godhead; but, on the other hand, he taught us to look up to God as the one great Father. I showed you that Paul and the other apostles of the New Testament, whatever high office they might have ascribed to Jesus, worshipped the God of their race, the one God of Israel. In other words, I tried to explain that the New Testament is a Unitarian literature, breathing from first to last the old faith in God and His unity. Trinitarianism was not then known in the Christian church, and cannot be said even to be foreshadowed in the Gospel pages.

Well, then, one naturally asks, how and when did Christians come to believe in a creed of which the Trinity



forms an essential feature? Where did these doctrines come from? This is the question I want now to answer, if you will give me your attention. The subject is not an easy one for young people; but I will use the simplest terms I can find in placing it before you, and I hope that some of you may follow up the study a little further, in your own reading, afterwards.

Let us try to form a picture in our minds of the first Christians after the time of Jesus. He has set men talking about a new religion, which he called the kingdom of God on earth. He has stirred up in many hearts an eager desire for a faith more real, and a life more sound and sweet, than that which Judaism was then able to give them. The old customs had grown hard and dry, and no longer nourished their highest aspirations, or comforted their souls. But in the teaching of Jesus, and the love of God which his life had shed abroad, there seemed to be a new and glorious day breaking for the people, long oppressed. The enthusiasm of the apostles was unbounded as they went about preaching Jesus Christ, the Saviour of men. It was no wonder that people in great numbers, weary of their empty forms, accepted the Gospel of Jesus. Let us now imagine that a hundred years or so have passed since his death. The Christians, though pressed by persecution, have formed many societies, or churches, for the worship of God according to the Master's teaching. Fresh converts came over to them every day from among the Jews, and from other nations as well. Take a note of this point, if you please, as we shall want it again in a little while, that all sorts and conditions of people, people of various nationalities and very different faiths, were



converted to Christianity. It would be interesting if I had time to dwell upon this early period of the Christian story, and recall the immense difficulties and trials which the Christians had to encounter in planting the infant church, and, too, the mistakes they made sometimes in the manner of doing it. But I can only point out one or two things which bear on my present purpose, keeping in view the question we have asked—How did Christian people come to entertain the strange Trinitarian ideas which are now believed?

Notice two things. First, it is safe to say that during that first century the missionaries of Christ did not hold this doctrine of Trinity. There is nothing among the surviving relics of their thought to indicate that they ever imagined God as a Being who was revealed to men in three persons. The most ancient Christian art has no such suggestions. The earliest hymns are without the Trinitarian Doxology. And the “remains” we have of writings ascribed to that period, though they raise all sorts of knotty theological disputations, do not discuss the question of Trinity or unity. You will know how to attach due importance to this point, my young friends, that here in the Christian church a hundred years after Christ the Trinity is not an article of belief. If, however, the Trinity has not yet appeared, I will tell you, secondly, what *has* taken place. In the imagination of his followers, Jesus has come to be thought of as a kind of second God, a God-man, if we may use the expression. Though nobody goes so far as to make him equal with the Almighty, yet, there is growing up a vain and foolish superstition in regard to Christ; many people have begun to talk about him as one


who came, almost by magic, out of the heavenly world, and who was God made flesh for our salvation. Those of you who have read anything about other religions are not likely to be very much surprised, I dare say, at this statement. You must have been struck with the fact that the great founders of religions have generally been venerated, even worshipped, almost as if they were gods, after their death. It has been so in the case of Buddhism (a religion, by the way, whose Messiah legends bear many points of resemblance to the story of Jesus). In each instance the disciples are not satisfied that their master should be regarded as one of themselves; they exalt him in imagination until he becomes more than human, a mysterious messenger, sent forth from God, to perform miracles of revelation in His name. This is what happened in the case of Jesus. At the end of the first century theologians are found to be discussing what office Jesus Christ occupies in relation to God. Was he an "Emanation," was he an Attribute of the Divine Being? It was not demanded that he should be considered equal to the Father; but some of them thought he had an existence in the heavenly world before he came to be a man in this world; and popular imagination seized hold of anything that tended to exalt the Master, and give him a name above every name by which man can be described.

Christianity, as I have said, grew and multiplied; converts were continually coming over to it from other religions. I have said that they were of all sorts and conditions. Picture to yourselves these new comers giving up their old doctrines in order to join the church of Christ. Some of them were Greeks, some were Romans, some

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Egyptians; they represented almost every accessible type and nation in the world as then known. Perhaps if we pause to look at one of these national types, I shall be better able to make intelligible to you what befel in regard to the early "corruption" of Christianity. And perhaps of all the foreign converts the most interesting to us were those who came from the land of Egypt. The Egyptians were a very remarkable people; they had their arts and sciences, and their philosophies, many ages before Jesus lived. And they had one quality about them which it is very important we should note, as bearing on the question we have to consider, and that was a certain fondness for mental speculation, for minute and elaborate reasoning. Of course much of their speculations would be accounted foolish now, in the light of modern knowledge. We see that when we deal with the origin and growth of the Christian Trinity. I imagine that the Egyptian Christians, though not only they, are responsible for it. The Egyptians seem to have regarded three as a sacred number, they believed, before Christianity had ever been heard of, that God, or rather each of their gods (for they had many gods), was a being of threefold nature. Some of you young people, I dare say, have seen pictures of the Sphinx, that great monument of Egyptian life as it was thousands of years ago, which stands there in the desert for everyone who visits that strange country still to see. It is said that the Sphinx, like many other things created by the Egyptians, has three parts, and is a combination of man and ox and lion, each part, of course, representing some thought which they desired to keep sacredly before their attention. This may be taken as an illustration of the

practice in Egypt of making trinities, especially in relation to divine things. You must not, however, suppose that it was only the Egyptians who were given to such a practice; for in several countries before the time of Christ, there existed similar ideas. God was three in one, or one in three, in some mysterious fashion. Thus you will find old trinities in India, in Assyria, in Greece. As to the last named country, indeed, if you will be patient another few minutes while I am on this matter, I should like to say a few words; for Greece is even more distinguished for learning and the fine arts than Egypt, and has contributed more elements to our civilization than any other ancient nation. Well, four hundred years before Christ there lived a Greek philosopher whose name everybody has heard—Plato; and Plato had taught that the Divine Nature was made up of three essences—God was the First Cause of things; He was the Reason, or the Word, He was the Soul of all our spirits. The followers of Plato dwelt much on these things, and in the time of Jesus there was what might be called a Platonic Trinity. I should almost say that there were trinities in the air. And it is this fact that seems to me of the greatest significance in the light it throws on the origin and growth of the Christian Trinity. How came the early Christians to believe in such a doctrine as that God is constituted of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and these three are one? I have brought you, I think, within sight of the answer. I do not wish to press my case too far; it does not by any means explain everything, but it gives us more than a very “broad hint” of the truth. If you keep in mind what has been said about all these pre-existent, surrounding specula-



tions, it will become clear to you how the Trinity got a footing in the Christian system.

This, then, is the explanation. The Trinity crept in with these new comers. I want to make that statement as emphatic as I can, so I put it to you again—the doctrine of God's threeness, which we reject, crept into Christianity with the early converts. And there is nothing singular in the fact that this should have occurred. If our own Unitarian church were to receive a large accession of converted Jews, or converted Buddhists, it is certain that the character of our teaching would in a generation or two be greatly modified by their influence; their ideas would, so to speak, mix with ours and gradually change the doctrine believed. Those ancient converts could not put away their previous ideas; they would reason and look at things much as they used to do. Sometimes they would distinctly aim to introduce the old into the new; but even though they might earnestly desire to follow the new lines of thought, it was inevitable that their old ways should cling to them, with the consequence that Christianity was changed.

But the change from Unitarianism to Trinitarianism was not accomplished without very great opposition, and in less time than several hundred years. Nobody proposed all at once that God should be worshipped as a Trinity, and Jesus accepted as God, the second person in that Divine partnership. The process was slow and painful, and I know no more weary reading, in some respects, than the controversies which were waged from time to time as to the precise meaning to be attached to the term "person," or the precise relation that Jesus should bear to the Father.

I shall have to speak specially about false doctrines concerning Jesus in my next address ; but I may say that it was always around him that the discussion of the Trinity waged most severely, and there is no doubt that the chief motive that led many to acquiesce in a belief in the Trinity, was that it seemed to prepare a fuller exaltation for Christ. Thus the son of God gradually assumed the extraordinary place of God the son, a title which he never would have dreamed of receiving ; and in due course (perhaps at the end of the fourth century), the Trinity was established as an article of faith among the Christians.

But I imagine some one reminding me that I have so far spoken in this address only of two elements in the Trinity ; what about the third ? The answer is very simple. The third person in the Trinity never gave anybody much trouble. The great trouble, as I have said, was in reference to Christ, and his place in the Godhead. That influence which ever emanates from God and gives light and strength and peace to earnest souls, the holy and comforting presence of God Himself, was made the third part of the arrangement. For a time the Spirit hardly seemed to sustain an equal position with the Father and the Son. I would use the expression reverently ; but I do not think one is far wrong in saying that the Holy Ghost's place in the Trinity was an *afterthought*.

Of the growth of the doctrine of the Trinity we have some very simple, but very clear, evidence, in the book of Common Prayer. The parents of some of you, no doubt, have got copies of it,—just look at the prayer-book when you get home, and read over the three creeds. The first is

called the Apostles' creed, and is the earliest. It may, I think, be described as a Unitarian document. It has many things in it that I do not accept, and is superstitious enough ; but it sets forth no Trinity, for the simple reason that the doctrine was not then "invented." The next creed is the Nicene; it dates from the Council of Nice, held in the year 325, when Arius disputed with Athanasius that Jesus was not the equal of the Father ; and we may say of it that, besides being in other matters grossly superstitious, it faintly foreshadows the Trinity. But we have to come to much later times, when the creed was framed which has been falsely attributed to Athanasius (who must have departed this life a century or two before), in order to get the Trinity in all its perfection of absurdity. To do our Church of England brethren justice the "Athanasian creed" is greatly disliked; and some decline to attend when they know it is to be repeated. I have even heard clergymen say they wished themselves well rid of it. And well they may. More in sorrow than in anger I quote you a few selections from it :—

"Whosoever will be saved : before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith.

"Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

"And the Catholic Faith is this : that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.

"Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the substance.

"For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son ; and another of the Holy Ghost.

\* \* \* \* \*



“The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible; and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

\* \* \* \* \*

“And in this Trinity none is afore or after other; none is greater or less than another;

“But the whole three persons are co-eternal together; and co-equal.

“So that in all things, as aforesaid: the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped.

“He therefore that will be saved: must thus think of the Trinity.

\* \* \* \* \*

“This is the Catholic Faith: which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved.”

I consider that creed to be a blot on the fair name of Christianity. It is full of logical absurdity; but what is worse, it breathes an evil spirit which is utterly alien from the “sweet reasonableness,” the gracious thought and life of Christ.

We Unitarians, my young friends, are doing what we can to get back to the mind of Christ, to his doctrine of God, his Father and our Father. It is not indeed in our power to have just the same ideas as he had, or live our life in the same form, nor is it to be desired if we could. Jesus belonged to his age, and we belong to ours; and nineteen centuries of changing manners lie between him and us. Yet we think we can still be guided by his essential principles, and that there is no better guidance in the world; that we can have the truth as it is in Jesus, which is permanent beneath all changes; the faith and love which, best revealed in him, never die, never grow old. So

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we want to realise again in that sense the religion of Jesus. I will close with a little parable. There is a spring of living water in the far-off hills. It flows through the land in a clear crystal stream, whereof thirsty travellers drink on their way. But into this stream flow other waters, and mingle with it, swelling the volume from time to time until the stream has become a mighty river ; but these waters are earthy and they corrupt the stream. I need hardly interpret the parable. Sweet and holy is the teaching of Jesus, sweet and holy his life ; but as the remembrance comes through the ages, heathen superstition enters into it and spoils much of its sweetness, except for those who can get back from the vain deceits and traditions of men into the spiritual companionship of Christ himself. Unitarianism is an attempt to get back to that first inspiration, to see God after the Christ-like man, as the one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all.

## CHAPTER III.

### *CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST AND THE WAY OF SALVATION.*

“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”—*John i. 29.*


THE third topic on which I desire to address you, my young friends, is the question—In what sense ought we to look upon Jesus Christ as our Saviour? I have hitherto discussed the subject of the Divine Nature, in order to show you that the Trinity-faith of our fellow Christians is unscriptural and unreasonable. In the course of my two former addresses I have had to say a good deal about Christ; but it was in regard to the position ascribed to him as the second person of the Trinity that his name has occupied so much of our attention so far. There is, however, a further and altogether different group of erroneous ideas in regard to Christ to be dealt with, viz., as to the sense in which he is “the Saviour of the world.” In most churches and chapels you will be told that you must believe in Jesus; lay your sins on him; you must take into your souls, by a supreme act of faith, the salvation which he has accomplished for you on the cross; otherwise you cannot be saved. Probably this teaching will be enforced by scripture quotations, such, for instance, as this: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;” or this: “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the

sin of the world ;” or this, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.”

It is necessary, in order to understand such sayings as these, to go back in imagination to the times when they were first spoken, and consider what were the circumstances that gave rise to them. We must not take a merely poetic and local expression, and fix it down to a universal meaning. All sorts of misunderstandings have occurred in the interpretation of Christian truths because our theologians have missed this principle. Now, when Jesus appeared, the Jews had long been waiting in the hope of a great leader, a great, human deliverer and guide ; one in whom a new period of prosperity should dawn and the national aspirations be satisfied. It is difficult for us, perhaps, to understand the force of this desire for the “Messiah,” as they called the anointed one who was to come ; but it explains a great deal that we read in the Bible (turn to *Isaiah* liii. for example). The Old Testament gives us a varied picture of many bitter experiences which God’s people (as the Jews regarded themselves) had been called to pass through. They had wandered in the wilderness ; they had been taken into captivity ; they had often sinned grievously against the divine law, and the divine chastisement had come upon them for their misdoings. But even in the darkest days there were some noble spirits who looked forward to a better and happier time, a time when men should become pure in heart and gracious of life, and the peace of God should rest upon them once more. Well, there were many who saw in Jesus Christ the fulfilment of these longings. He spoke to the people about a Father in Heaven who had never ceased to care for them ; and bade

them turn to Him and live. God was not far from any one of them. It was not by repeating ancient creeds that seemed to have lost their virtue, nor by the administration of ordinances, that the people would be saved, but by righteousness, by filial love to God and brotherly love to mankind,—this was the truth he preached. And his life was likewise. He went about doing good. He healed the sick, and halt, and blind. This was his divine work. Teaching so simple and life so pure and kind appealed straight to the heart of many who were weary of the old religion, and “they believed on him.” But naturally others were offended. They looked upon Jesus as a revolutionary ; an upsetter of society, an enemy of customs which had become sacred with time, and which they valued more than faith and hope and love. They intrigued against him, and after a time prevailed upon the Roman authorities, to whom their nation was then subject, to have him put to death. And according to the mode of martyrdom then in vogue Jesus Christ was crucified.

I have no doubt that when we thus consider what deep feelings were stirred, both friendly and hostile, by the words and the life of Jesus, we shall be prepared to find in the Gospels some things that have comparatively little meaning to-day, except in a spiritual or parabolic sense. Sometimes an enemy would call him Beelzebub ; sometimes a friend would use an expression of unmeasured admiration, perhaps adopting a phrase which was then clear enough, but which cannot mean the same thing now. Take one of the quotations made a few minutes ago, in illustration of my remark. John the Baptist, as he beheld Jesus coming to be baptised of him in Jordan, in the fervour of loving



discipleship, exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Modern Christians still quote the text, as if it had in it some eternal force, and as if its significance were just the same in this England of the nineteenth century as in the Palestine of the first. But it is perfectly clear that John was thinking of one of the old Jewish customs which was to come to an end. He was thinking of their practice of sacrificing the lamb as a sin-offering to God. What he means is that God does not need any such sacrifice. Let such things come to an end. Let them end in Christ; and let the people look on Jesus as the Lamb of God that, once for all, "taketh away the sin of the world." I do not want to say a word that might lessen the character and mission of Jesus in your thoughts; and there is, no doubt, a certain spiritual suggestion in speaking of Jesus as the Lamb of God. All I say is that the text does not properly belong to our time and our present ideas, because we have no practical knowledge of the custom to which it clearly refers. If the same Jesus Christ were to come amongst us to-day he would employ our own language in speaking to us; and his disciples would use our own language in speaking about him. It is, therefore, entirely misleading for people to make a hard and fixed doctrine of such expressions, and tell you that you must be washed clean in the blood of the lamb, in order to find acceptance with God.

Now, we feel so strongly that this way our fellow-Christians have of taking local words—that is, words used in reference to some institution or manner of life that is long since done with—and using them in a rigid, doctrinal sense, has led them to entirely wrong conclusions,—con-

clusions sometimes even shockingly at variance with our best thoughts and affections, that we are obliged to speak quite plainly on the matter, and say we do not believe in the "plan of salvation" which is taught in orthodox churches. We protest against these false teachings; and we ask—Is there not a way of salvation in harmony with common sense, and simple faith, and with our straightforward obedience to the will of God?

The most serious mistake they make is this. They tell us that the world lies under the Father's anger, and that He intends to cast away a great number, by far the greater portion of the race, into eternal, tormenting fire. I do not know whether it is my advantage over some of you young people, or whether I am at a disadvantage, in that I was brought up in a Trinitarian Sunday school. But at any rate, though I have some very painful recollections on the subject, I am the better able to understand what the Trinitarian doctrine is. I have believed in these false ideas, so far as a child can believe in them. I can well remember that in the hymns we used to sing there was a great deal about the angry Father above who waits to make His "justice" felt in this terrible manner on all who have not managed by faith in Christ to secure His forgiveness. It is difficult for you to realise the full force of such a belief. Men engaged in honest daily callings, the mother busy about her household ways, children at school or at their play, even the infant asleep in its cradle,—against them all the sentence of God's wrath has been pronounced, and they are in danger of hell fire, unless they accept the merits of the Saviour. I often wonder how anybody could ever have been persuaded to

believe such a thing ; and indeed I ought to say that the doctrine is not preached and insisted on as much nowadays as it used to be. Many people, to their credit be it said, both ministers and congregations, are getting to feel ashamed of it, and they leave it out as much as they can. Still that *is* the doctrine which is supposed to be entertained. It is part of the theological system against which we protest. It is certainly the teaching some of us were "brought up on;" in some places it survives even now, in all its force, and narrow souls still believe that God will cast into endless burning all those who do not accept salvation through Christ's atoning work.

Here are some fragments of a hymn that used to be sung in the Sunday school I attended as a child :

Jesus who lived above the sky,  
Came down to be a man and die.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
He knew how wicked man had been,  
And knew that God must punish sin ;  
So out of pity Jesus said  
He'd bear the punishment instead.

And it is that pitying Jesus who is supposed to have given expression to the doctrine of Hell as an eternal place of torment. I need hardly tell you, however, that such a notion arises from that misuse of ancient and figurative language to which I have referred. It is, perhaps, worth while to apply the observation to the particular words in the New Testament on which this woful teaching has been based. We all know, of course, that Jesus did sometimes warn people of God's severity "to punish sin;" and he did certainly make use of words which have been translated "Hell" in the New Testament. Let me point out to you that




in the revised translation the word Hell is not found as often as in the old. I will tell you why. There are two words in the Greek which used to be translated Hell. The revisers have chosen to leave one of those words untranslated altogether, and so it stands in English as "Hades." But everybody knows that Hades carries in it no such grievous thought of punishment and pain. It might be translated the under-world, the abode of the dead, or, the grave. As to the other word (as *Matthew* v. 22) it is a pity that the revisers did not face the question in the same manner, and give us the word "Gehenna," or some indication of what was in the speaker's mind. Jesus was accustomed to speak to the people in parables, in figures of speech which drew their force from human life and experience. And when he spoke of the severity of God, and this determination to exterminate the evil of the world, he betook himself to a form of language which his hearers would no doubt at once understand, but which theologians have—I fear sometimes wilfully—misunderstood. There was a vacant space not far from Jerusalem, a valley into which refuse and all sorts of vile things used to be thrown; and in this obnoxious place fires were kept constantly alight for the purpose of burning up putrid matter, and purifying the air. It was strictly in the manner of Jesus to take such a thing as this and make of it a vivid illustration of the truth he sought to enforce. "Behold," said he, "these ever-burning fires; so, too, will God burn up the sins of men! He will deal with your misdeeds as you deal with unclean things; He will cast them into the fire which burns for ever." But every thoughtful person understands that this is highly-wrought metaphor, not truth stated in exact

terms. Surely it does not assert that God will really cast any soul into actual flame to dwell for evermore in torment! Nothing could be further from the mind of Christ. It is melancholy that his disciples should so ignorantly wrest his language from its natural meaning, and found on it a belief at once so senseless and so cruel.

A further gross mistake is to imagine that salvation is some means of escape from punishment, from Hell. Christ is supposed to rescue us from the terrible fate which God has stored up for sinners, and provide for us an opening into Heaven. Now let us put that notion out of our minds, my young friends, as completely as we can. If you will try to get at the root-meaning of the word salvation, you will find it means something very different. The idea is, that which makes one sound and well, healthful, strong, perfect in life and in the true enjoyment of life. It is the soul's health which salvation is to bring, and health of soul is very much like health of body in some respects. Some of you, I dare say, even in your young life, have known what it is to be ill, faint of limb and weak in spirit, unable to go about the daily work, or to enjoy the active zest of living. The sick one looks out of the window and sees all the eager business and active intercourse of men in which he can take no part. He longs for what may renew his strength, so that he may do as others do; for what may make him whole, and enable him also to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint. In the same way the soul is often sick, in need of new strength, of divine health; though people are not apparently as fully conscious that they are in a state of moral disease. All the sinful thoughts, all the evil passions we give way to, are like an illness in the spirit,

the loss of our soul's power and grace. It is to these things that Jesus Christ addresses himself. When I read about the miracles which he is reported to have wrought, there is one class of them that I note with much greater interest, and which I accept much more believingly. The Gospel reports ascribe "many mighty works" to Jesus that he never did; we cannot shut our eyes to the exaggerations which appear in the several accounts of his life. But there can be no doubt that the highest reputation of Jesus as a worker of miracles is that which refers to him as a wonderful healer of men, which pictures him to our imagination as one who went about healing the sick, making the blind see, and the lame walk. I will be quite candid with you on this point. Many of the diseases in question were of that peculiar kind which pertain to the nervous system, such as hysteria; diseases that can sometimes be thrown off to some extent by a strong effort of the will. For my own part, I believe that Jesus was one of those great souls who by the word of faith, or a touch, as it were, of the hand, can assert authority over the feeble wills and fallen spirits of men; and I always think of this when I read the words he is reported often to have said—"Arise, take up thy bed and walk." You must think about it for yourselves. My object at present is simply to call your attention to the fact that Jesus acquired a remarkable reputation as the great physician, the man who, without medicine, had power to make men "whole." And I like to dwell on this class of miracles because it seems to me to illustrate the gracious spirit of the Saviour. There is no spiritual teaching in the report that Christ walked upon the sea; or that he turned water into wine. But there is spiritual teaching in the




story of his raising men out of their ailments and despairs, so that they found new life and health. If we simply transfer our thoughts from the bodily to the spiritual sphere, we may say that was the mission of Christ,—to make men whole, to give them moral health, to sweeten their lives with heavenly faith and love.

But we also have to protest against another misunderstanding that we find among our fellow Christians. They have a doctrine called the doctrine of the Atonement ; and by this doctrine they set forth that Jesus saves men not merely by what he does for them, but by what he does instead of them. The hymn I quoted a little while ago tells us that Jesus came to “bear the punishment instead ” of those who had actually sinned. He has wrought out their salvation ; they have nothing at all to do themselves except only to believe. The Unitarian says this is wrong. It is in the first place nonsense, and in the second place an altogether unjust arrangement to which, we may be quite sure, the Divine Father of us all would never consent. There is no one of us that would seek to diminish the honour that is due to the Founder of our Faith ; I trust there is no one amongst us who is not profoundly thankful for the blessings which God has given to the world, and for the grace and truth and beautiful ideals which come to us individually from the life, the remembrance, of Christ. But he has done nothing *instead* of us ; we have each one to work out our own salvation. Let me give you a plain illustration. The good mother is always doing gracious things for her child ; the good father too : yet, however much we owe to our parents, they have done nothing in our stead ; for no one can act in that capacity. Just

consider what would be the case if parents were to do the children's lessons for them ; would those children ever be educated ? Would they make any advance in learning ? One may show them how to do a thing when they are perplexed, and help them over a difficulty when they are sorely tried ; but every scholar must do his own lessons. That is the way of life always ; and I am quite sure there is no other way to Heaven. One may give another a hand sometimes at an awkward place ; one may cheer another by the encouragement of companionship ; but each must make the journey for himself. It is no use to imagine that Jesus Christ has a different rule from the common, though his influence upon us be higher than all other influences. He shows us the way, he teaches and inspires us ; and then he is obliged to leave the matter in our own hands. We are expected to be good and true and brave sons of God, by our own efforts and prayers. I have little patience, I am bound to say, with people who "believe in Jesus," or profess to believe in him, while yet they feel no earnest aim, and make no exertion to live the better life which God requires of them.

Yes ! What Jesus has chiefly done for us is to show us, in his example, how beautiful our life may be if we strive to make it so. It is all simple, reasonable. There is our pattern, clothed in the attractive garments of salvation. "We needs must love the highest when we see it," sings a true poet. Whenever we see anything noble, any act of heroism or self-sacrifice, the natural law comes into operation by which we desire to be like unto it in our own character. Nothing can be clearer when once we have put aside all the superstitions, the foolish traditions which



have unfortunately lodged in people's minds in reference to "the Saviour," and look at the subject straightforwardly. I sometimes think that a little child can understand it better than grown-up people, with all the pretended wisdom of their theology. I see in little children, before their belief is spoiled by the false teaching, a capacity for understanding that beautiful story of one who went about doing good such as many of their elders might envy. You, my young friends, have grown to be something more than children; but I hope you retain, unspoiled, our simpler thoughts about Jesus Christ, the simpler thoughts which are always the best. It is true Christianity to try to share in his goodness; to follow in his steps. It is all expressed, again, in one of Charles Wesley's hymns :

God of Jesus, hear me now,  
Take the meek disciples vow ;  
Thou so good, so true, so kind,  
Fill me with the Saviour's mind.

Lowly, loving, meek and pure,  
May I to the end endure ;  
Be no more to ill inclined ;  
Like Messiah's perfect mind.



## CHAPTER IV.

### *A UNITARIAN VIEW OF THE BIBLE.*


“Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, which is in righteousness.—*II Tim.* iv. 16.

It would hardly seem right if, in a series of addresses of this kind, some time were not definitely devoted to the consideration of the Bible, the book which is held in very great reverence by all Christian people. If only because the Bible occupies the position of honour, and is always quoted authoritatively in support of the creeds of Christendom, there would be sufficient reason for asking—What is this book which is in the mansion of the rich and the cottage of the poor alike (though I fear it must be admitted often dust-covered and very little read)? But besides such a reason, some of us believe that for what must be called its intrinsic merits, for the real and noble religious value of it, this wonderful collection of writings is worthy of our very best attention. I am therefore about to bring before you, my young friends, a few considerations that may guide you in trying to form a right judgment concerning the Bible. And if I seem to speak disparagingly of men's superstitions in regard to it, if I deny that the Bible is a sort of charm to bring out on all solemn occasions, it is only with the object of setting before your minds what I conceive to be its genuine value, its real and spiritual significance.

The name "Bible" comes to us from the Greek language, and simply means "book," or "the book;" or still better, "the books." It would perhaps help matters if we kept the word in the plural number, so that we might always remind ourselves that the Bible is a number of writings collected together and bound up in one. For it is the first, and in a sense, the greatest mistake that people make about the Bible, to think of it as one book, written straight through from beginning to end, and all the parts of which have been made to belong to each other by some plan that God settled beforehand. This error, it will be seen, produces many unfortunate consequences; and we must clear our minds of it to begin with. Do not forget, then, that the Bible is a collection of many books, which are very different one from another, in form, in matter of thought, in their "origins," and, above all, very different as to their religious or teaching value. Suppose we were to have bound up together some old treatise on astronomy, a translation of Julius Cæsar's Histories, Chaucer's Poems, Shakespere's Plays, Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," and this hymn book which is used in our worship, etc. Then we should have a very good illustration before us of the literature we call the Bible. The Old Testament is a collection of thirty-nine various books similarly connected, or rather, similarly unconnected with each other. Of course I would guard myself against all possible misapprehension in raising such a comparison. I do not suggest that the works I have just mentioned are to be compared in value with the Biblical books,—that is a question which I leave for the moment untouched. I merely wish to illustrate the point: how many-sided the Bible is; that it is made up from widely differing sources;




that the several parts of it were collected long afterwards, and were not written straight on with the purpose of their being bound up as one book,—the “book divine.” These books were written in various places, and long, long times apart. Some of the writers are quite unknown to us even by name. They knew nothing of each other, just as Shakespere knew nothing about Bunyan, or as Bunyan knew nothing probably of some writer on astronomy whose work he might have seen. And what is further to be noticed, though it is very obvious, no one ever dreamed that what he was writing would at length be joined with other men’s writings, and become part of the Bible which is in all our churches and in our homes. The Old Testament is a number of Jewish scriptures, the gathered-up fragments of the literature of a people from whom we have received many of our best lessons in divine truth, while much of that literature has been lost. One part is history, another gives us detailed accounts of their rites and ceremonies ; a third, again, shows us what sort of “science” was entertained among them. There are scriptures touching the laws by which the people were governed ; there are the Psalms, which might almost be styled the great hymn-book of the Church. There are the prophetic writings, not, as some people ignorantly imagine, writings that were intended to exactly foretell coming events, but rather chapters in which great and loving souls spoke to the people to warn them against wrong, and point out the way of holiness and peace ; and so on, each book written for its own purpose, and bearing a message to its own time. And I ought to tell you, perhaps, at this point, that there were some other Jewish books which used to be



included in our sacred volume, but which are not generally inserted. If any of you have got at home an old family Bible, a real old one, you may find in it, between the Old and the New Testaments, another set of books, called the Apocrypha, by which term is meant that though they are printed with the canonical books, they are not considered as sacred as the contents of our orthodox Bible. The Bibles on the reading desk at Cross Street and Strangeways, and many other chapels, contain the Apocrypha, and sometimes we take our lessons from that source; why not, if the passage selected conveys true and beautiful thoughts? Besides these, again, there are Hebrew writings that have come down to us from very ancient time, and which are still held in great reverence by our brethren the Jews. Josephus, one of their historians, who lived soon after Christ, says: "We have not an innumerable number of books among us, but only twenty-two books which contain the record of all the past time." When he speaks of twenty-two books, of course Josephus refers to those which were specially held in honour at that period: but as we have seen our Bible now contains thirty-nine. It is plain, therefore, that since Josephus lived other scriptures have been discovered; and some which were then considered less sacred or less important have since been allowed to rank in sacred literature, or, to use the correct saying, have been made canonical. It is interesting to observe the distinction that was nearly always made between the so-called inspired scripture and that which was not inspired. People, apparently, must have their sacred literature, the word of God, and this must be clearly distinguished from other and "common" books. They have not, however, always been

quite clear as to what should be put in, and what should be left out. The priests decided the matter from time to time, and the people, often too ignorant to raise any question, were willing to abide by their decision. We are told that Jesus used to go into the synagogues, and there "he stood up for to read." The roll of scripture was handed to him by a priest, and the great teacher "read the lessons" to his countrymen assembled for worship. Perhaps we here in our services have read from the Old Testament at the same passages, though among Christians to-day "holy scripture" is not so much the Old Testament as the New, not a word of which of course was then written.


Uncongenial as it always is to have to employ language that may seem over critical and fault-finding, I must speak to you frankly. People have held such foolish notions about the Bible that I am bound to tell you, so far as I know them, the real facts of the matter. The writers were human; we can easily see how mistaken they often were for want of better knowledge, and how prone, also, to be sinful, like the rest of mankind. Thus, if we read the accounts of the Creation as given in *Genesis* and remember what science is teaching in these latter days, it is plain that the old scripture writer did not possess any full or accurate knowledge, and therefore that what he says is not to be accepted as giving a correct description of the beginning of life and nature and man. He wrote according to the ideas then entertained; but the ideas were erroneous. Or, again, sometimes when I take our lesson from the Psalms, in the course of much that is rich and beautiful in spiritual force, I come upon a verse that contains some very unjust judgment, or some very bitter feeling, I feel obliged



to pass it over, for I do not receive *that* as the word of God. If the writer calls down the curse of God upon his enemies, am I to imagine that such expressions are inspired in the same way as some sweet passage in the Sermon on the Mount? Nothing of the kind. I interpret the case from the point of view of common sense. I know that the writer is, for the moment, allowing his lower self, his passionate and vicious spirit, to get the better of him, and that he has no true guidance for me till that bad mood is passed. It is idle to think that the Bible is not thus subject to the error and moral taint which belong, in some measure, to all human handiwork. I am not "pulling the Bible to pieces" in saying this, as no doubt some of our brethren would charge me with doing; I am only speaking the simple truth as to the imperfections of it, just as I would also speak the simple truth about the general excellence of its teachings, and the grandeur and beauty of many of its pages. No one can read certain passages that I might select from Isaiah, or the Psalms, from Jesus, from Paul, without acknowledging the noble religious power of the Bible to give strength and consolation, and awaken aspiration for a clean heart, a true and loving life.

The same principles must also be applied to the New Testament, to which I now invite your careful attention for a few minutes. The New Testament is definitely the Christian scripture, Christ being its principal subject. Now try to imagine yourself living in the first or second century. Soon after Jesus had passed away people began to think about writing his "life." There was a wide-spread desire to have some reliable account of all he said and did. There were very soon, then, many treatises of one sort and

another, aiming to set before the world a presentment of Jesus; there were very many more such books than your New Testament gives you any notion of. It is commonly imagined by good Christian folk that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the four evangelists, were the only persons who wrote on the subject of the Teacher; and these four are supposed to have been inspired to give a perfect account of everything that God thought important to His revelation. Well, I have here to say two things—first that they do not give us a perfect and full account by any means, but only fragmentary accounts. They had to write largely from memory and hearsay, for there were then no such things as shorthand notes and newspaper reports of what Jesus had done, and the words which he had spoken. If you will take any two of the Gospels in which the same matter is referred to, and compare them together, you will find that they do not describe it in the same language; sometimes, indeed, there is serious discrepancy between the two accounts. I say this not because I would disparage anything in the New Testament, but simply to show you that the books are written by human and fallible men, who were liable, like others, to make mistakes and report things incorrectly. It is exactly what one might reasonably expect. If you and I had to describe an event which happened thirty years ago, or recall something that had been said by a great man, even if we had seen the event, or heard the words, ourselves, we should be certain to give different versions of the matter; our reports would be certain to vary in some particular. This is just what we find in the Gospels; imperfect accounts that do not always tally with one another of the life and work and character



of Jesus. Indeed the wonder is, to some of us, not that there are so many differences, but that there is so much broad agreement; and that the substantial thought and power of Christ's words, and the exceeding beauty of his life, have been so well preserved. But in the second place, these Gospels of ours are only a few of the treatises that were written during the first two hundred years of our era, professing to give a true and faithful history of the Master. There were many other writings; there was indeed a considerable mass of Christian literature from which the selection had to be made. I have no wish to suggest that the books which form the New Testament were not the best selection that could be made. My object is simply to explain to you that they *are* the result of such a selection among many writings, because, it appears to me that the fact is very instructive, and helps to throw some true light on our New Testament reading. And I ought to add, as a point of further interest to us, that some of the writings which were rejected by the editors contain passages of great force and beauty, though often amidst much that, we must confess, is not very edifying.

I have to-day brought with me, my young friends, a copy of what is known as the apocryphal New Testament. This New Testament Apocrypha is a collection of writings that were rejected when the New Testament was compiled, like the articles thrown aside when an editor nowadays makes up his magazine. These rejected manuscripts were from time to time printed, and lately an enterprising publisher has issued them in book form, so that people may see for themselves what sort of writings were refused admission into the Gospel. The book is not yet known as

it deserves to be. I have brought a copy with me in the hope that you young people may acquire some interest in it, and I will in a few moments read one short quotation from the part called "The Infancy." Some pages there are in this book which are strikingly similar to chapters in the authorised Gospel; as, for instance, the story of the young Jesus in the temple among the doctors is here told in almost the same words as we find in the Gospel of Luke. On the other hand, the little story I am about to read touching the early life of Jesus is quite unlike anything we ever read before; it is interesting, although it shows how foolishly people talked, and how strangely they tried to make miracles out of the simplest incidents of his life. The passage in question describes Jesus at school. He is supposed to have been at another school previously, but he left it because he proved to have more learning than his masters.

"They brought him then to a more learned master, who when he saw him, said, 'Say Aleph.' And when he had said Aleph, the master bade him pronounce Beth; to which the Lord Jesus replied, 'Tell me first the meaning of the letter Aleph, and then will I pronounce Beth.' But this master, when he lifted up his hand to whip him, had his hand presently withered, and he died. Then said Joseph to Mary, 'Henceforth we will not allow him to go out of the house! for everyone who displeases him is killed.'"

Of course the story is very absurd. I have read it to you in order to illustrate this one very important point, viz., that early in the Christian era there were a great number of stories about Jesus, many of them very strange and childish, —stories at first floating in the air, so to speak, but at length embodied in "scriptures" which sought to find a place in the Gospel. It was a long time before it was definitely

settled which books, out of this mass of literature, should be recognised as "sacred." Indeed the selection was not completed until about four hundred years after Christ. There was much difference of opinion and discussion and heart-burning before the matter was settled; but at last the Christian volume was compiled, and copies of it were multiplied for reading in the various churches. Even then, however, the difficulties were not ended; for, as we saw when I had to refer in my first address to a spurious passage in the first epistle of John, men who were employed to copy the writings sometimes made mistakes in their work. The consequence is that in the Greek manuscripts from which scholars have made our English translation there are various readings, slight differences of phrase and meaning, and it requires extremely close investigation to determine which manuscripts are the best, or most like the first writings. You see, therefore, that the New Testament, like the Old, is a very human collection; that at every point the men who made it were liable to error. It is no use to talk about inspiration if we do not at the same time recognise these simple facts, as our Trinitarian brethren are so unwilling to do. Their theory is that the Holy Spirit was given to the various writers and compilers in such a manner that they could not go wrong. It guided the writers' hand so that they made no slips of the pen; it guided their thought and imagination so that they did not wander even an inch from the truth. To me that would not be a real inspiration. It is strange and unnatural. I am thankful for such a book as our New Testament, and for our Bible as a whole. I believe that it has a right to rank highest in the sacred literature of the world, and that it



deserves our best study and our warmest reverence; but let us honour it for what it is, and not for what it is not. It is not word for word, nor chapter for chapter, nor book for book, inspired. But it is full of noble thoughts nobly expressed; and every noble thought is from God. It is rich in spiritual lessons of the highest power and beauty and suggestiveness; and who but the Father of Lights puts these gracious things into the heart of man? Allowing for the imperfections, knowing as we do that the followers of Jesus wrote from incorrect remembrance of their subject, and with something of the exaggerations which belonged to the early Christian age, we still find in the Bible a record of thoughts which are divine, and in the New Testament a fair and holy image of the Son of Man.

Our consideration of the subject before us, my young hearers, would hardly seem complete if I did not say a word or two about other books, and particularly other books which are likewise considered inspired and holy by the religious people to whom they specially belong. Christians are too apt to forget, or rather, too apt never to learn, that there are other "Bibles" besides their own; and that these other scriptures are held in equally great reverence by their own followers. What a flood of light is thrown upon our Scriptures by this simple statement that there are other religions besides Judaism and besides Christianity, each of which has its inspired writings! And I venture to say that nobody can properly understand the Bible who does not recognise the fact that it is one and only one of the great collections of religious literature. The Mohammedans have their holy scriptures, the Koran; the Hindus have their Vedas. And wherever you go in search

of a religion, there you will find the sacred roll or volume, the book that stands in the place of our Bible. What, then, does all this mean? Is there anyone among us so narrow-minded as to say that our Bible is inspired, and the scriptures of other nations are not? that ours contains the whole of the religious truth which God has revealed, while their books contain no saving wisdom? I for one have no sympathy with such a poor view of the word of God. It is right for us to love our own; and I believe we are fully justified in holding that chapters in *Isaiah*, in the *Psalms*, or in the Sermon on the Mount, have no equal anywhere in other scriptures. Yet that is not to say that other scriptures do not contain their measure of light and truth, any more than it is to claim that our Bible contains no human error or earthly alloy.

Nor do I think it fair to conclude without a word in reference to good books that make no special claim to inspiration, or to be called scripture. Books are of many kinds: there are mathematical treatises, books scientific, books of history, books of poetry, books of theology, and books, in the truer sense, of morality and religion. I like to think there is some shining of heavenly truth in every book that uplifts my thoughts and touches my heart. If from any pages that I read there breathes a purer and gentler spirit, then I think I am not very far from an instance of the law that men have written as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost. I have occasionally read in our public worship passages from such books as Thomas à Kempis' "Imitation of Christ," or the "Meditations of Marcus Aurelius," or Emerson's *Essays*; and I am certain that my friends as well as myself have felt that these books

appealed to them with a true spiritual voice. And whenever I do so, whenever I now and then depart a little from the custom of taking the first lesson from the Old Testament and the second lesson from the New, in order to read a chapter from such books as these, I am thereby illustrating in some little way the principle of the larger Word of God, that word of God which dwells in every expression of noble and beautiful thoughts. He has not shut up the whole revelation between these two covers. He has given the same spirit to other souls as well, in every place and age, and inspired every line that calls men higher in the life of truth and goodness. We may call them scripture or what else we will—there is nothing in a name; but if they lift up the human hearts to which they are addressed, and guide the steps of men in a perfect way, then are they also God's Word.



## CHAPTER V.

### *THE UNITARIAN INHERITANCE.*

‘ But call to remembrance the former days.’—*Heb. x. 32.*

OUR address to-day, young friends of the Unitarian faith, is to be on the subject of our forefathers, those who prepared the way for the great thoughts we now cherish, and to whom we are indebted for many of our best religious privileges. This is always a congenial subject to myself; for I am proud of our Unitarian ancestry. Some persons are fond of telling us that their family at one time belonged to the aristocracy, or their great-grandfather was a favourite of the King, and so forth; and nothing seems to give them greater pleasure than to show us the family chart as a proof of their good descent. That may be very natural, but it is foolish when people make much of it, for, after all, one is no better for having a noble ancestry.

’Tis only noble to be good,  
Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood.

Nor are we any better, perhaps, for having had true and great religious forefathers. Everything depends on how we use the inheritance we have received. At the same time, it may be very useful to us, and serve to stimulate us in the effort to realise our best life, if we look back and recall the sort of men who were our spiritual fathers, and see how nobly they did the work which God gave them to

do, in their day and generation. They have handed down to us holy memories out of which spring our truer faith. They have handed down to us many great thoughts of God's will in the midst of human life, and left in our path the bright example of their lives to encourage us in the performance of the duties which lie before us to-day. Let us try, therefore, to picture to ourselves some of the things of the past from which our doctrine has been developed, and some of the men through whose devoted labours we have received so much blessing.

I should like to have led you in imagination out of our own land, to notice some matters connected with the great movement which is known as the Reformation, as that movement took shape on the continent of Europe. I am afraid, however, that I have only a very few moments in which to take one passing glance at that larger scene of action, because the subject we have to discuss pertains rather to what happened in England. For many centuries, in England and in Europe, there was only one church, the head of which was the Pope. There was as yet no Protestantism, no Dissent, no Unitarianism, in the sense in which such terms are now fulfilled. There was one fold, one shepherd, for anyone who wanted the benefits of religion. But it was not a happy family; though, so far as appearance went, people believed according to one pattern of ideas, many of them did not really agree with the doctrines that were set before them, or with one another. Religion fell upon troubled days. There were grievous abuses in the church; abuses that men saw, but were almost powerless to check. If anyone openly declared opposition to its beliefs or practices, he was liable to be put to death

as a heretic ; so the evils had to be endured. But at length the storm burst forth. One Martin Luther spoke out fearlessly against some of the wicked things that were done by the priests in the name of religion. His great principle was to set the Bible free, and permit men to read it for themselves ; for, you must know, the Bible was until then read by the priests in Latin, and none of the common people understood the Latin tongue. Others now joined in the struggle for a reformed religion. One of the greatest of the reformers was John Calvin. He planted himself down in Geneva, and preached that the Bible and not the Pope must be accepted as the guide of faith, and that the services must be reformed. Well, their cause grew ; people gathered round them, and what we now call Protestantism came into existence. It is necessary to make this reference to the men who originated the Protestant church. You must not think, however, that I speak of Luther and Calvin as if I agreed with all their teaching. They did a great and necessary work, and opened the way for the religious developments which followed. Still, they often seemed themselves to misunderstand the principles of religious freedom, and became narrow in their turn when others wanted to carry matters further. I will give you one instance in illustration, an instance that is peculiarly appropriate to be spoken of in any Unitarian church. Calvin was a Trinitarian, indeed a very narrow Trinitarian theologian, who did more, perhaps, than any one in modern times to reduce to a hard, rigid system the erroneous theology which I have been treating of in these addresses. He was a man who could not brook any contradiction ; and when the Unitarian heresy began to

show itself on the continent he took the most extreme measures to stamp it out. There is this blot upon the good name of Calvin that, under his orders, a learned and holy man, Michael Servetus, was burnt to death in Geneva for writing against the doctrine of the Trinity. Servetus, by his own study of the scriptures, had come to the conclusion, as we have come to the conclusion, that they do not teach the Trinity ; and for the offence of publishing his anti-trinitarian teaching he was cruelly martyred on the 27th October, 1553, a day that ought never to be forgotten in the Unitarian denomination. It is curious to think that what Servetus suffered death for teaching, I can preach freely in this church to-day, none daring to make us afraid. What a change ! Unitarianism, you see, did not perish with Servetus. It lived quietly on in a few of the best minds, and God continually raised up some who cherished it carefully as the simple truth that would one day be fully declared ; it lived and did not die, although we do not hear much more about it for a considerable period.

Now let us return to our own country. The Reformation had begun to work here too. Instead of there being only one church, over-ruled by the Pope of Rome, there was now a Protestant section as well ; that is to say, there were some priests who with their people had shaken off the old authority, and preached the Bible way instead of the Papal way of salvation. The king became protestant, and became the head of the Church of England ; and England, we may say, turned protestant. But as time went on matters developed further. The Church of England did not satisfy the quickened aspirations of the people. Its creeds did not command their conscientious

assent; some of them sighed and strove to establish a freer order of religion, a religion in which their convictions might be fully expressed in suitable forms of worship and piety. This was the beginning of what we call Nonconformity. It is the beginning of that wider movement of which Independents, Baptists, Quakers, Unitarians, etc., form the several parts, and suggest the various lines by which the new faith was developed. The critical year, the year that is most striking in eventfulness, so far as this subject is concerned, is the year 1662. I wish you would take note of this year and never forget it. What happened, then, in 1662? Some of you young persons, children as you are of Unitarian households, have no doubt been present at meetings held in our Memorial Hall, Albert Square. Perhaps you will sometime note the inscription over the doorway; it tells you that the hall was built by Unitarians as a memorial of the year 1662. In that year was passed an Act of Parliament styled the "Act of Uniformity." No doubt there had been some laxities of belief and some circumstances tending to provoke the passing of such an act; but there can be no doubt that the spirit and purpose of it was thoroughly wrong, thoroughly opposed to the principles of truth and progress. What was this act for? It was to insist that all clergymen must believe and teach exactly what was contained in the prayer-book, that, no more and no less. There was thus to be one style of religion, only Protestant, as we say, instead of Catholic. Of course you see at once that such a demand was altogether unjust. People *cannot* all think alike on these matters, any more than they can all wear clothes of just the same size and shape; God did not intend that they



should. They may indeed *pretend* to think as the Church and Parliament bid them ; but it must be morally bad so to pretend, and hide the honest thoughts of their hearts. Well, happily for England, and happily for us, there were a number of men who bravely refused to pledge themselves to accept the prayer-book as their pattern ; and the upshot of it was that under the pressure two thousand clergymen resigned their livings in the church. Some of them were among the best, the most highly educated, the most earnest ministers. They were doing much good work in their parishes ; they were beloved by their congregations. But they would not play with their consciences. They were willing rather to become poor, and begin the world again.

    Their altars they forego, their homes they quit,  
    Fields which they love and paths they daily trod,  
    And cast the future upon providence,  
    As men, the dictate of whose inward sense  
    Outweighs the world.

Now, of course, you are not to understand that these men were Unitarians. Unitarianism was not at that time the matter in question. Generally, probably, they were men of liberal and progressive thought, men who would have been Unitarian, many of them, if they had lived to-day. I quote them as those who were ready to suffer for conscience' sake. Unitarians have had considerable experience of that ; and it is one of our great watchwords, one of the holiest things in our faith. That God is one and not three persons, we believe ; that Jesus Christ is man, of like passions with ourselves, we earnestly believe. But over and above all this it is the Unitarian principle that a

man must be true to conviction, sincere in worship and in life, and, for the sake of whatever he holds to be truest and best, be prepared to suffer hardship. And we dwell on the remembrance of these men because they set us heroic examples of the good conscience which is better than all the creeds, whether Trinitarian or Unitarian.

From this time dissent made rapid progress. Severe laws were passed against Nonconformists, and they were much persecuted for righteousness' sake. They had to build their chapels in out-of-the-way places, so that they might not be molested when they met together for worship of God, and even then the constables or soldiery often came and drove them from the place. But there was no stopping them. The more the law tried to pull up the tree, the faster its roots seemed to lay hold of the soil. Well now, keeping in mind what has been said, I want to direct your attention for a moment to one of these dissenting sects, who bear an intimate historical connection with some of our churches. They were called Presbyterians. They were an enlightened and earnest body of Christians. And one characteristic of them was this, that when they built a meeting-house they did not determine and fix beforehand what kind of theology should be preached there, but they left the place free, so that each fresh generation of worshippers should settle for themselves what beliefs and what religious forms they would have. They did not say, for instance, "here must the Trinity be taught; or here must the Atonement be taught," or anything of the kind, although for the most part they were themselves fairly orthodox in their views; but they left the whole matter in "open trust" for time and

circumstances and the free will of men to decide all such questions. It is very interesting to see what subsequently took place. The teaching in most of these churches slowly altered until it became Unitarian. Little by little the old orthodox doctrines were dropped, and the succeeding race of Presbyterians slowly came to accept the rational faith. You know that many of our old chapels are Presbyterian. The Presbyterians built them, not for Unitarian worship but for free worship, for they wished jealously to guard the liberty that had been so hardly won. Most of these chapels have been rebuilt; but often the new edifice stands upon the same ground as the old one; and the renewal of the structure is an outward token of the grander renewal of thought and faith. Yet there has been no revolution, no violent rupture; the progress has come about by perfectly natural and orderly transitions. For two hundred years and more, in some instances, the congregation has been maintained, the younger members growing up as the elders died away, while the theology gradually moved from Trinitarian positions to the Unitarianism of to-day.

It will help you to understand how matters generally proceeded if I refer to one case in particular of the old Presbyterian meeting houses; and it happens that Cross Street Chapel provides an excellent illustration of what I have been saying. In 1662 there was a young clergyman in Manchester whose name was Newcome. When the Act of Uniformity was passed he gave up his living. He was one of the two thousand who would have a clear conscience at any price. For some time he was not allowed to preach. He used to go as a listener to the

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church of which he was formerly the minister. Soon, however, he procured a licence to hold service in a private house, and so passed several years. In 1694, when times had mended a little and the clouds were clearing away, Cross Street Chapel was built for him. But by that time Newcome was an old man, and he did not live much longer. This man was the founder of Nonconformity in Manchester. He was not a Unitarian. He was a preacher of Christ and the liberty with which Christ would make men free, according to his light. The chapel was free in regard to theology, as it still is. Then followed a long succession of ministers under whose preaching the doctrines changed and passed over to Unitarianism. Twice the building was attacked by the mob, so strong was the animosity of Church and King against dissent; but the truth could not be extinguished. And to-day, for all thoughtful people who ask of the times which are past, Cross Street Chapel silently tells the story of how these old Presbyterian churches, from having been orthodox, have become the homes of a broad and simple Unitarian faith.

The first actual Unitarian chapel was built in London for Theophilus Lindsey. This, of course, is a somewhat different story. Mr. Lindsey was a clergyman who felt doubts concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. Quietly reasoning within himself, he found that he did not believe in the threeness of the Divine Being, which as a clergyman he was supposed to accept. That was about a hundred and fifteen years ago. Already Unitarianism was being preached, as I have explained, in some of the old Presbyterian chapels, notably the one in Leeds, where Joseph

Priestley was then minister, and it was making a great stir. But there was no chapel as yet definitely known, like ours, as Unitarian, and it was to the task of preaching Unitarianism in London that Lindsey set himself. He went there with very little money in his pocket, and with the future all unknown to him, and began, in an auction room, to hold Unitarian services. The friends who gathered about him built the chapel in Essex Street, London, which was recently converted into Essex Hall, as you all remember. It is said that barristers, members of Parliament, and some of the ablest and foremost men of the time used to go to hear the addresses of Mr. Lindsey, who continued to minister in that place for twenty years. In telling of the rise and progress of Unitarianism, it is necessary to revert to the name of Theophilus Lindsey as the man who was instrumental in building the first English Unitarian chapel; and I need hardly add that his work is always held in cordial esteem and affection throughout the Unitarian body.

A few words ought also to be said about that other man of noble spirit, Joseph Priestley, who must be regarded as the leader of the Presbyterian movement toward the distinctly Unitarian position. The life of Priestley shows us one of our finest examples of hard and devoted labour for the welfare of his country, one of the finest examples, too, of bitter persecutions most patiently borne. A statue was some years ago erected in Birmingham to this remarkable man, who was no less great in science than in religion; and only last year Philadelphia has done similar honour to his memory. The people of Birmingham have learned to honour one whom they once despitefully used, for

great mobs were set against him by High Church magistrates, and they burnt his meeting-house and wrecked his home, on account of his religious doctrines. More than once he was in danger of his life ; and at length, when old age was creeping on him, he left the English shores he loved so well in order to escape further persecution, and end his days peacefully in America. When I think of Lindsey I think of Priestley also. They were friends, and leaders of twin movements. Each in his own manner raised our banner and led the van, and fought bravely for the faith ; and to Priestley, not less than Lindsey, the Unitarian Church owes a very large debt of gratitude.

The time at my disposal is nearly gone, and I could still have wished to dwell on some other distinguished memories which we recall with much pride and gladness. I should like especially to have dwelt a little on the work of Channing and Parker in America, but I must draw to an end. I think, at any rate, you have seen what manner of men they were who have gone before us, men of courage, men of love to God and to mankind, and consecrated to their holy work. The Unitarian Gospel shines more brightly for their lives. They show us in what spirit we ought to try and carry on the cause of true religion. We in a little while must follow them into the eternal silence which closes all human things. Till then we are here to do what we can. You that are still young, to-day growing into manhood and womanhood, you also are called to be faithful to the truth, and to help to further it ; and I cannot point out your duty better than in thus showing you the men and their works to whom we owe so much, and bidding you follow in their footsteps. Times no

doubt have changed. There is not quite the same work now to be done. We live in an age of freedom. We are allowed to worship God and perform our religious duties as we choose. Yet the deep principles of life and truth and conscience never change. Indeed, there is still much social prejudice against Unitarian ideas, and those who hold them; there is much misunderstanding as to what our Gospel is. We have to break down all such prejudices so far as we can by a Christ-like life, by showing forth the righteousness of Jesus, his pure and gentle spirit, in association with this better, simpler creed. But whether the world accept us or not as fully as we should like, we have to be faithful to our conviction, and give our witness to the truth.

One word more. It is a repetition, but it is important to be borne in mind. As I have tried to put it before you to-day, Unitarianism perhaps looks like a new thing. It hardly seemed to have any existence till about a hundred years ago; that is, it had no organisation. Three or four hundred years since you could hardly find any Unitarians at all, at any rate who were willing to say so. There were no Unitarian Chapels; the Presbyterians slowly adopted Unitarian ideas during the last century, and Lindsey started the first actual Unitarian church in 1774. Then is Unitarianism a comparatively new thing? Yes, in one sense Unitarianism is new. For a thousand years before there was, in this sense, none of it. But in another sense it is old, as I have explained in my previous addresses. It is old as the apostles. It goes back to the very time of Christ. It is essentially indeed the truth which came from his lips. Nay, it goes back into ages

long, long before. It was the creed of Israel, the creed of that Judaism of which Jesus is the child—"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." But the doctrine became obscured by superstition, overlaid with heathenish speculations; and there it lay hidden and forgotten for many centuries. Then it shone forth again. These men of whom I have spoken to you helped to make it shine out amid the darkness. As Christian people get wiser they will return to their first love, their simple faith in Jesus and in the Divine Father he revealed—the God to whom he taught us to pray in simplicity: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.





## CHAPTER VI.

### *SOME FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON UNITARIAN DOCTRINES.*

“These things teach and exhort.”—*I Tim.* vi. 2.

IN reflecting upon what has been said to you, my young friends, in my previous addresses, it struck me that perhaps a few things that have only been slightly referred to, or merely implied, in the matters treated of, might with advantage be gathered up and definitely dealt with in this further address. I therefore speak to you briefly to-day on various topics connected with Unitarian belief, in order, as far as one may in so short and simple a series of lessons, to render the presentation of our case complete.

Unitarianism indeed is quite as much a tone, a habit and principle of thought, as it is a series of clearly defined conclusions. It is a different way of looking at the whole question of religion from that adopted by our orthodox friends. It is a different way of looking at all things, from any common action up to the sublimest manifestation of the Divine Spirit in nature and God's providence in the lives of men. Whereas many orthodox people begin by saying that reason should not be applied to religious matters at all, we apply our reason to them without any hesitation. To myself, I confess, it seems altogether childish to say that God is offended when we try to reason about holy things. He who gave us that reason must have intended us to use it. We claim that we have the right to


ask for explanations, so far as history and science and intuition are able to explain the works and ways of God. I think our friends fall into a confusion of ideas on this point. There are many things that we cannot understand; things that perhaps never will be understood by the mind of man in its earthly state. Nobody can explain to us the marvel of a star; or the mystery of the flower.

Little flower, but if I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is.

We are surrounded by a thousand things which transcend our comprehension; we are everywhere surrounded by an infinite mystery, of which our own life and feeling are indeed the highest part. Yet if anyone were to tell me that he once heard God speak in audible words—whether in the English or the Hebrew language—I should not believe his statement, And why? Because the statement is not merely *above* my comprehension; it is *opposed* to reason and fact. Just as, again, when I am told that God will cast all the unsaved into an eternal fire of torment, I refuse to believe the statement, not because it is *above* my understanding, but because it is altogether *contrary* to my sense of the Divine goodness, which, I am quite sure, must be more merciful than the goodness of man. I cast aside this bad theology because I see that it is only a vain deceit and tradition of men, and the best thoughts and feelings of my being rise up in protest against it. Unitarians interpret religion, thus, by the light which God has put in their nature, believing that in the reverent exercise of their inward faculties they have a true guidance from Heaven.

And this leads me to speak of our doctrine of human

nature. According to orthodox theology human nature is like a splendid temple in ruins, or a tree that is blighted and withering away. It was divine once, but it is now fallen, corrupt, hopeless, a poisonous spirit of evil entering into life at its birth, so that every word and every action is marred by sin. This doctrine we entirely repudiate. We come to the question with no such low theological preconception ; if we have a preconception it is of course the other way ; it is to feel that humanity is the noble workmanship of God. The divine element which the Creator once breathed into our souls is not thwarted and destroyed. That is our belief. Now, no one among us can shut his eyes to the fact that men are subject to base passions, and that these base passions do often overcome the good, and spoil the fair fruits of life ; nor can we, or ought we to escape the sense of sin in our own members ; “ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” I would not treat the question lightly, and say, in cheap words, that human nature has nothing the matter with it. And yet it is more profitable to keep our attention fixed as much as possible on the better side. When an orthodox theologian talks to us he always begins by ignoring the good ; or, if you compel him to recognise the force of all the righteous facts, all the sweet workings of human life, he tells us that these things are not good as they seem, that they are an illusion, a wile of the evil one. Nay, not only does the theologian make as little as possible of what is good and noble among men ; so do people, unfortunately, in their ordinary ways of speaking, pass a sort of condemnation upon human nature, though often without being conscious of doing so. Thus, when somebody has



done wrong and gone astray they say—"Ah, human nature again!" But why should such a phrase be applied to the evil and not to the good? If a man leads a life of virtue and embodies in his conduct the kindly promptings of his heart, no such comment is made. Yet why not then also say—"Ah, human nature again!" I object to its being supposed that the sinner is human nature, and the saint is not. If it must be admitted that life is continually producing men and women who walk disorderly and commit all sorts of wickedness, let it not be overlooked that the majority of men are at the same time living purely and peaceably; that family-life is commonly the scene of sweet affections; and that every day manifold works of heroism and self-sacrifice are wrought; and these must be put into the other scale. I don't know that there is much to be surprised at in the case, because so much of men's better life is of that common, undemonstrative sort which makes one think of a profound saying of Jesus:—"The kingdom of heaven cometh without observation." But I cannot take my notion of human nature from one part of the facts, and this the smaller part, while all these happier things offer their silent testimony that God made man in His own image.

But I go further than this. If you ask me for a true specimen of human nature I claim that I may choose Christ. He is my ideal man: he represents to me what man is essentially, and what man may be actually. I do not take the murderer, or the thief, or anyone given over to vicious gratifications, as a fit example of our kind. Were you asked to illustrate some species of flower, you would not select a spoiled, cankered specimen, but the best and most

perfect one that you could find. The example in which the stem and petals are sound, and the leaves perfectly unfolded, provides the correct illustration of what nature designed that flower to be. I proceed on this principle when I have to explain human nature. I choose the best examples that I can find because, as a fact, they give us the full and true conception of the subject. We know very well that all the beautiful growths of the earth are liable to be injured by blight, by rough winds, or by the tainted air in which they live ; but what we want to see is the real and perfect flower. It will be well, I think, if you keep this figure in mind whenever you have to give an answer to those who say that human nature is bad, ruined by sin. Sin is not so much *in* man, that is in the spirit, the will and choice ; it is often the result of temptations, and circumstances external to ourselves, like the canker on some of the flowers which nature still makes so fair. There is in humanity, on the other hand, a natural spirit of goodness, a natural admiration for all good words and gracious deeds ; and we find that people rise in the moral scale, often, in proportion as the tempting, evil conditions are removed. All which, and much more that I might mention, goes to confirm Unitarians in their sense of the essential goodness and dignity of human life. Man is God's workmanship, God's offspring, who at the worst never altogether loses that character, and at the best, as in Jesus Christ and all sweet and holy souls, makes it come true in his actual being.

To the old theological doctrine of human nature there used to be attached another doctrine which I feel it necessary to refer to, though I shall do so in the fewest

words,—the doctrine, I mean, of “the Devil.” If I followed my own personal inclination I should be silent altogether on this topic, because I have no belief whatever in such a being, that is, considered as an actual person. But then we are dealing not with actual things so much as popular ideas and superstitions ; and there is no doubt that in times gone by belief in such a being has played a very considerable part in religious systems. Some passages in the Bible have suggested the idea that a real, personal spirit of evil goes up and down in the earth tempting men astray. The “Serpent” that appeared in the garden of Eden, the Satan of whom we read in the first chapter of Job, the Devil and the Evil One mentioned in the New Testament, have led to various forms of this superstition. I feel at a loss sometimes to know how far persons in the old times, who made use of these expressions, really imagined that there was an actual person, “almost as large as God,” as I once heard a child say, who came and put wicked thoughts into the heart ; or how far the terms were employed in a poetical sense. The ancients were very much given to clothing the great principles of life with imaginary personality. The Satan in Milton’s “Paradise Lost” is an instance of poetic expression. Popular theology has never been very clear as to who or what the Devil is ; but as a means of frightening people to accept religion the term has been vaguely employed as a symbol of a great ghostly enemy of God and man, who is ever leading the unwary into mischief. It seems hardly necessary to say that Unitarians have no such article in their creed. The Evil One is, in my view, simply an expression for the evil thoughts of our own hearts ; the inclinations

and passions, come whence they may, which sometimes lead us to do wrong. Evil is a great mystery, and, like other things I have already spoken of, is quite beyond our reason to comprehend. But there is no need to make nonsense of our doctrine of evil, and to institute an impossible being outside our own nature as the author of it.

Now to take up another point, the doctrine of the Future Life. The Unitarian shares with his fellow Christians in the great hope of Immortality. One can hardly affirm, perhaps, that there is any clear or vital difference between their views and ours on a subject so vast and mysterious. We all know so little, and some of us feel so much, when we come in contact with these immortal thoughts, that our words must always be few. It is one of the things we leave, so to say, in God's hands, trusting altogether in His goodness. The writer of "*In Memoriam*" says:—

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust,  
Thou madest man, he knows not why;  
He thinks he was not made to die;  
And Thou hast made him; Thou art just.

Some of you who are not far advanced in life's journey may not feel as much as your elders do the preciousness and depth of this hope; how much it helps many people to bear the losses and trials of this earthly existence, to believe that God is leading them along life's way to the time when the "angel faces" of their loved and lost ones will be seen again. We cannot believe that they are for ever parted from us; we believe that God will take us where they are, since He is good. This, then, is all we know, that the life to come will be a life of the highest spiritual

satisfactions. God will give us there every good desire of the heart, as He will deny us every gratification of wishes that are selfish. A bright, beautiful life, by whatever imagination we may choose to think of it, that higher heavenly life must be! We may sing of it in the language of one of the favourite hymns of many Christian people:

Jerusalem, my happy home,  
Name ever dear to me,

or in other forms of speech. Only let us remember that these are but figures, shadows, and not literal descriptions of the reality. No man has lifted the veil to see the kingdom which is hidden by death. It is enough that we rely upon the goodness of God, who will do more and better for us than we can ask or even think. If I offer one criticism upon the manner in which some people hold their faith in a future life, it is that they forget how certainly the next world must grow out of this world, as its natural sequel. God cannot arrange the present world on one set of principles and that which is to be on another. This is the preparation for what is to come. This is the childhood, that the life mature and full, yet the same life in continuance and development; this the ante-chamber, that the glorious inner Temple with its holy of holies, yet the same building. Don't let anyone suppose that he can enter at once into an angelic state of existence there for which he has not here made earnest preparation, by learning to love whatsoever things are pure and lovely and of good report.

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And now, my dear young friends, I must bring these addresses to a close. I have spoken of most of the



doctrines which are generally entertained among us, the doctrines which form the substance of the Unitarian faith. The main ideas are, the Unity and Fatherhood of God, the life of Christ considered as our perfect example, the reasonable reverence that is due to scripture, the grandeur of our historical inheritance as Unitarians, and the things I have now spoken. The consideration of these matters has unfortunately led us to see the differences by which we are divided from our brethren. It is an unpleasant thing to have to dwell on points of difference. I find no enjoyment in mere controversy, and if I had had no better object than to show you where, as I think, many of our friends have gone wrong in the beliefs they entertain, I should indeed have very much misapprehended the teaching of Unitarianism. The fact is that in the deep things of life and piety and trust we are all working in the same direction, Trinitarians and Unitarians alike, all inspired by one and the same spirit. Do you gather from anything I have said that I think there are many religions? Have I led you to suppose that the Roman Catholic, or the member of the Church of England, has one religion, and the Unitarian another? I hope not. There is but one religion, and these are its diversities of expression; there is but one music; these are the varied instruments on which it is played. When I say that, I can imagine that some one of you may answer that it is inconsistent with the scheme and manner of these addresses. For if there be only one religion, then what does it matter which *form* we adopt, why should one form claim superiority over the rest? Well, it matters in this way, that every person must cultivate religion according to the aspect that is true

to his conscience, and helpful to his life and heart. It would be quite impossible for me to go to a church where doctrines are preached which I hold to be false doctrines, even though I might be impressed with the earnestness of the people who believe them, or who unthinkingly accept them. I must join with my own spiritual kindred ; I must belong to the church that represents my conviction. But what I mean by saying that underneath all our diversities there is one great principle is this. It is not enough for us to have the right belief ; we must make that belief into a religion—a personal religion. *Through* the belief we must *worship* ; *in* our belief we must *find moral strength and holy guidance*, else it is all as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. And in all beliefs there is some of this vital, inspiring power. The aim should be not merely to have the correct ideas, but to feel their vital, inspiring power. Now, that is your task, to bring your lives into a sacred relation with these truer thoughts and principles. And in striving to do this you will find yourselves to be in the same case as others. The means you have to take in order to make yours a saving faith is much the same as the means whereby they reach their religious good. Sunday comes to you, as to them, with its call to worship ; with its suggestions of higher and holier aims than the world encourages in you during the week. You must have your sacred things and cultivate them. If you neglect God's seasons as they come and go, be sure that you will suffer the inevitable spiritual decline which comes of neglecting them. If, while you say that God is one, and Christ is man, you form no filial habit that brings you to the Father's feet, cherish no discipleship that draws

you into the service of Christ, then your Unitarian religion is only the shell without the kernel, the mind without the heart and soul. I fear it must be confessed that many Unitarians set too little store on the religious duties and the spiritual privileges which their doctrine should afford. May it not be so with you ; but may you prize the faith which comes down to you through so many honoured and holy memories, and may your lives reveal its beauty and its power.

The broader faith is not, I ween,  
Neglect of doctrine, good and true,  
Nor lack of faith in things unseen,  
Nor trust alone in old or new.  
It is not in the outward deed,  
The letter or the reason cold,  
Which cannot meet the soul's deep need,  
Nor Christly life within it mould.  
Must not the broader faith this be,  
Whate'er our ritual, creed, or name,—  
A life from self and sin set free?  
A heart with love to all aflame ?  
O Heavenly Father, this I ask—  
Thy life, Thy Spirit, Thy sweet love !  
Truly to live, and bless each task,  
The broader, better faith to prove.



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DEAR FRIEND,

In accordance with the Rules of the School, I subjoin a Report of your Attendance during the Quarter ending .....18.....

In the morning you were present.....times, of which..... were early, and.....late. In the afternoon you were present ..... times, of which ..... were early, and.....late.

*M*

.....*Superintendent.*

Teachers are earnestly requested to make such arrangements as will ensure punctual and regular attendance.

No.

## 9. Superintendent's Yearly Summary.

Short forms giving summary of the Quarterly Reports. 2d.  
per dozen.

Reduced Size Specimen.**Superintendent's Yearly Summary.**

Name of School .....

**SUMMARY OF THE QUARTERLY REPORTS.**

| 18.....                                    | Jan.<br>to<br>Mar. | April<br>to<br>June | July<br>to<br>Sept. | Oct.<br>to<br>Dec. | Total<br>for Year. | Average<br>for year. | Remarks. |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------|
| <b>TEACHERS :—</b>                         |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| No. on Roll beginning of the quarter       |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Admitted during the quarter .....          |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Left during the quarter .....              |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| On the roll, carried to next quarter ..... |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Average morning attendance .....           |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Average afternoon attendance .....         |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Who have joined the church .....           |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| <b>SCHOLARS :—</b>                         |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| No. on roll beginning of the quarter ..    |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Admitted during the quarter .....          |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Left during the quarter .....              |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| On the roll, carried to next quarter ..    |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Average morning attendance .....           |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Average afternoon attendance .....         |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Visits paid to scholars .....              |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Who have joined the church .....           |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Admitted as teachers .....                 |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| <b>LIBRARY :—</b>                          |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| No. of scholars receiving books .....      |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Volumes issued during the quarter .....    |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Volumes added to the library .....         |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| <b>MEETINGS :—</b>                         |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Of teachers .....                          |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Of managing Committee .....                |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Of parents .....                           |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Of scholars .....                          |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Of former scholars .....                   |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| <b>MONEY :—</b>                            |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Collected for benevolent objects .....     |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| Recd. for periodicals and books .....      |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |
| <b>NUMBER</b> of periodicals issued .....  |                    |                     |                     |                    |                    |                      |          |

Signed .....

Date .....

Superintendent.

## REQUISITES FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL. 25

### 10. Teachers' Quarterly Report.

Forms to be filled up by Teachers for Superintendents' use.  
1/- per 100.

Reduced Size Specimen.

## Teachers' Quarterly Report.

(To be filled up and returned to the Superintendent next Sunday.)

Name of School .....

Division ..... Class .....

For Quarter ending ..... 18 .....

- (1) Number of Scholars now in your class .....
- (2)   "       "       received during the Quarter.....
- (3)   "       "       left during the Quarter .....
- (4)   "       "       attending Day School .....
- (5)   "       "       in Situations .....
- (6)   "       "       who have books from the Library .....
- (7)   "       "       who pay into the Bank .....
- (8)   "       "       who belong to a Provident Society ..
- (9)   "       "       who belong to the Band of Hope.....
- (10)  "       "       visited during the Quarter .....
- (11) How many of the parents attend a place of worship? .....
- (12) Have you any special difficulties to contend with? .....

If so, what are they? .....

.....

Signed .....

Date ..... 18 .....

### 11. Secretary's or Superintendent's Quarterly Report.

Large forms showing position of school during each quarter  
of the year. 1d. each.

**With spaces for numbers of books lent and numbers required.**

Very useful. 2/- per 100.

*Reduced Size Specimen.*

**BACK OF CARD.**

| LIBRARY CARD.          |           |           |               |           |           |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| <i>School.</i>         |           |           | <i>Class.</i> |           |           |
| <i>No.</i>             |           |           | <i>Name</i>   |           |           |
| NUMBERS OF BOOKS LENT. |           |           |               |           |           |
| 18..                   | 1st Week. | 2nd Week. | 3rd Week.     | 4th Week. | 5th Week. |
| Jan.                   |           |           |               |           |           |
| Feb.                   |           |           |               |           |           |
| Mar.                   |           |           |               |           |           |
| April                  |           |           |               |           |           |
| May                    |           |           |               |           |           |
| June                   |           |           |               |           |           |
| July                   |           |           |               |           |           |
| Aug.                   |           |           |               |           |           |
| Sept.                  |           |           |               |           |           |
| Oct.                   |           |           |               |           |           |
| Nov.                   |           |           |               |           |           |
| Dec.                   |           |           |               |           |           |

[illegible]

Gummed paper, perforated, for placing on each book. 8d.  
per 100.

### *Reduced Size Specimens.*

SUNDAY SCHOOL  
LENDING LIBRARY.

*No.*.....

This Book must be kept clean  
and returned before the end of  
.....days.

SUNDAY SCHOOL  
LENDING LIBRARY.

*No.*.....

This book must be kept clean,  
and returned before the end of  
.....days.

No.

**14. Class Registers for Teachers.**

Ruled and dated for the current year. Cartridge cover, 16 pages, prices 2d. each.

**15. Scripture Atlas.**

(PHILIPS'). 12 Maps, 6d.

Large Wall Maps of Palestine, Blackboards, &c.

[Obtained to order.]

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**XIV.—Reward Cards, Attendance Tickets, and Illuminated Texts.**

*N.B.—No Discount is allowed on Cards.*

**16. Joy and Peace.**

Beautifully Illuminated Cards, 18½ by 7½, printed with birds and landscapes, just published, and specially recommended for wall decorations. Can be had, with suitable Scripture Texts, or with the words "Welcome," "A Merry Christmas," "A Happy New Year." To be had singly, or in dozen packets. Price 4d. each.

**17. Peace and Happiness.**

Chaste and neat Floral Cards, 14 by 8, with appropriate Scripture Texts, carefully printed, and beautifully illuminated. These cards have already had a large sale throughout the country. Price 6d. each, or 5/- a dozen.

**18. Trust and Love.**

Superior Cards, 16 by 10, exquisitely printed, very beautiful floral designs, with Scripture Texts in Gold. Price 1/- each, or 5/- for six.

**19. For Ever.**

A series of six Scripture Cards, with neat floral designs, 10 by 7, very suitable for wall decorations. Price 3d. each, or 2/6 a dozen.

*PENNY PACKETS, each containing 6 Cards.*

**20. Scripture Texts.**

In fine Chromo printing.

**21. The Lord's Prayer.**

On Six Chromo Cards.

**22. The Ten Commandments.**

On Six Chromo Cards.

*FOURPENNY PACKETS, each containing 12 CARDS.*

- 23. **Brief Precepts from the Bible.**  
Floral Cards, with illuminated Texts.
- 24. **Words of Counsel from Scripture.**  
Illuminated on Floral Cards.
- 25. **Bind them upon thine Heart.**  
The golden words of King Solomon. 12 Cards with flowers bound with ribbon.
- 26. **Little Leaves from the Garden of Eden.**  
12 Cards with Autumn leaves.

*SIXPENNY PACKETS, each containing 12 CARDS.*

- 27. **Goodly Fruits.**  
Cards of Fruit, with appropriate Scripture Texts.
- 28. **The Lord's Prayer.**  
Illuminated Cards of the Lord's Prayer from St. Matthew's Gospel.
- 29. **Sacred Songs by the Sweet Singer of Israel.**  
Cards with selections from the Psalms.
- 30. **My Father.**  
A packet of 6 Cards decorated with Autumn leaves and berries.
- 31. **Christmas Chimmings.**  
12 choice Floral Cards with Mottoes and selected Texts.
- 32. **Morning Messengers.**  
12 elegant Bird Pictures with Scripture messages and selected mottoes.
- 33. **Fanes of the Faithful.**  
12 Cathedral Views, with applicable Mottoes and Texts.
- 34. **Bible Blossoms for Christmas.**  
12 selected Floral Cards, with original greetings and quotations from the Word of God.
- 35. **Greetings from God's Gift Book.**  
24 Floral Cards with seasonable greetings.

No.

36. **Light from the Book of Life.**  
12 elegant Sprays, illuminated with light from Scripture.
37. **Carols from Canaan.**  
12 pretty Bird Pictures with scriptural thoughts.
38. **Gems of Goodness.**  
12 choice Floral Designs with biblical selections.

*ONE SHILLING PACKETS, each containing 12 CARDS.*

39. **Memorable Words**  
Of the Great and Good upon Christian Duties and Virtues.
40. **God's Beneficence.**  
Exquisite Drawings of Flowers, with large type Texts on the back.
41. **God's Providence.**  
Drawings of Birds by the same artist as the last, with large type Texts on the back.
42. **Textile Plants of the Bible.**  
Coloured Pictures, with Sunday School Lessons on the back, founded on Scripture references to the Cloth-making Plants.
43. **Cloth-making Plants.**  
Coloured Pictures of Plants from which Textile Fabrics are produced, and an instructive lesson printed on the back of each.
44. **Divine Precepts.**  
Eight Autumn Leaves with Scriptural quotations.
45. **Messengers of Mercy,**  
4 choice Sketches of Birds with Christmas Mottoes and appropriate Texts.

*SPECIAL SHILLING PACKETS FOR PRIZES.*

46. **The United Kingdom.**  
A series of 22 maps, with pictures of places of interest and descriptive letterpress on the back.
47. **The Kings and Queens of England.**  
The entire series of 37 Rulers, together with the great seal and coin of each reign, in 13 sheets of beautifully coloured reliefs.



No.

**48. The Language of Flowers.**

Consisting of a series of 8 outlines, which are intended to be ornamented with 12 sheets of beautifully coloured reliefs of flowers.

*SIXPENNY PACKETS OF ATTENDANCE TICKETS.***49. Tiny Texts for Little Children.**

96 Illuminated Tickets, printed on gold ground.

**50. Heartsease and Violet.**

100 Sunday School Tickets printed in colours.

**51. Tiny Texts for Happy Hearts.**

216 small Cards, with Prayers, Confessions, and Declarations from the Book of Psalms.

**52. Golden Words from the Bible.**

Flowers in miniature upon golden backgrounds. 40 in packet.

**53. Bible Texts.**

For the Young, containing 48 cards in the packet.

*BAND OF HOPE AND TEMPERANCE CARDS.***54. Temperance Texts.**

Bible Words bearing on Temperance, in bold, illuminated Lettering. 6d. a packet of 12.

*CERTIFICATES OF MERIT.*

For Sunday Schools, Bands of Hope, and Window Gardening Societies.

**55. Reward of Merit.**

Attractive Floral Designs, with space for the name of the Scholar and the Teacher, and the words, "Presented to," printed in colours. 6d. a packet of 12.

**56. Certificates of Merit.**

Larger sizes, new and special designs, supplied at 2d., 4d., and 6d. each.

*PRESENTATION LABELS.***57. Gummed Labels.**

For Prize Books, Illuminated, with spaces for names of Scholar and Teacher. 4d. packet of 12; larger size, 6d. packet of 12.

*SHEETS OF COLOURED RELIEFS.*

58. "Robinson Crusoe."

59. "Little Red Riding Hood."

60. "Cinderella."

Specially suitable for amusing young children. 1d. each.

*CARDS AND PICTURES FOR DECORATION OR PRESENTS.*

61. Hymnal Gems.

A series of 5 extremely striking cards, each having the first line of a Favourite Hymn printed in white and silver on grey ground. Specially recommended. 1d. each.

62. Bible Gems in Christmas Light.

Illuminated Cards representing Children and Flowers, with seasonable Mottoes and Texts. 1d. each.

63. Gems from Scripture.

Gathered for the Little Ones. Illuminated Cards decorated with designs of Children. 1d. each.

64. Roses amid the Frost.

Elegant Rose Sprays, with new Mottoes and Texts. 1d. each.

65. Roses for the Home.

Superior designs of Roses. 1d. each.

66. Rejoice in the Lord.

Very pretty cards, showing two texts and made to stand with strut. 1d. each.

67. Sing unto God.

Ready mounted cards, with silk cord to hang up. 2d. each. larger and superior 3d. each.

68. Golden Precepts.

Floral Cards with suitable Texts, 9 varieties. Size 5½ by 8 inches. 1d. each.

69. Gems of British Art.

Chromos from Landseer's Pictures. Six varieties, with descriptive notes. Size, 6 by 4½ inches. 1d. each.

70. Little Children.

Pretty Pictures of Children and Flowers, with Texts from Scripture. Four varieties, size 9 by 7½ inches. 1d. each

No.

**71. Messages of Comfort.**

Illuminated Cards, decorated with Birds and Flowers. 1d. each.

**72. Lithographic Portrait of Frederick Nettlefold, Esq.**

President of the S.S.A., on plate paper. 1d. each.

**73. Chromo-coloured Natural History Wall Plates.**

For the Use of School, Kindergarten, and Nursery. Each plate measures 32 by 22 inches. Full descriptive letter-press, in large, bold, readable type, at foot of each plate. 1/- each. Varnished and mounted on stiff boards, 2. Varnished and mounted on Cloth, with Roller, 2/6



THE OWL (*Strix*).

Reduced from Coloured Plate, 32 by 22 inches.

**SUBJECTS.**

1. The Lion.
2. „ Tiger.
3. „ Elephant.
4. „ Monkey.
5. „ Dromedary.
6. „ Horse.
7. „ Ostrich.
8. „ Peacock.
9. „ Cock.
10. „ Duck and Drake.
11. „ Eagle.
12. „ Owl.

*A variety of Large Cards, with Scripture Texts, at 1d., 2d., 3d., 4d., 6d., 1/-, 1/6, and 2/6 each.*

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35 ml -

20  
26



